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Open Textbook Implementation: A Caribbean Experience

Student Dissertation

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Mon: Open Textbook Implementation: A Caribbean Experience (Andrew Augustine)

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Andrew Augustine

24 January 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nNQYWZD174>

Open textbook implementation: A Caribbean experience.

Research has shown that some of the major barriers to open textbook implementation are sustainability and policy implementation. The case explores the achievements challenges and barriers to the implementation of open textbooks within the Caribbean region with special reference to Grenada as one of the first Caribbean countries to begin the foray into open textbook implementation. The case stimulates discussion in areas of communication strategy, ownership, perceptions of quality and also looks at the politics within the region in terms of continuity of policy directions in the wider Caribbean context and within the narrower perspective of implementation of open textbooks for small island states. It also includes ideas for a more in-depth discussion of issues relating to sustainability and the models which should be adapted for charting a future for open textbook implementation in the region.

Many great projects have not made sufficient progress due to hurdles encountered in implementation. This has direct implication in the Caribbean where there have been many initiatives to overcome barriers to implementation. There have been several free laptop per child programs as well as national textbook programs in existence in a few Caribbean states which have proven to be high-cost ventures. In several cases, school books are provided to all students for free. With the rising cost of books, additions to the curriculum and increases in the student population, these programs are rapidly becoming unsustainable. The solution would be an open textbook program. However, there have been some issues with implementation at various stages. This case study serves as not only an investigation, which is researched based on the issues but also looks at alternatives and recommendations for moving the process forward.

It provides a view of implementation against the background of the unsustainability of free school book programs and the large sums invested by Caribbean governments which can be divested into the development and implementation of open textbooks.

The case is built on information from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) as well as documented information received from Ministries of Education within the Caribbean. This is augmented by other online sources and direct discussions held with persons who participated in various open textbook initiatives including regional workshops.

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[W Taleo](#)

10:16am 5 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hi Andrew, I like your final conference promotional video. I look forward to your conference presentation. I see this issue of sustainability of edtech and educational initiatives is a concern in every place. I'll be interested to hear of some barriers that you have been able to overcome. I'd be interesting in applying your findings to the Small Island States in the South Pacific where I have worked.



[Phill Grimes](#)

11:16pm 13 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

I would love to see a wider spread implementation of open textbooks. Publishers seem to hold too many cards at others' expense



[Andrew Augustine](#)

1:11am 18 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hello Wendy. There have been some daunting challenges to open textbook implementation in the small island states of the Caribbean. My research as I prepared this case study has certainly given me some additional perspectives.



[Andrew Augustine](#)

1:14am 18 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

Hello Phil. I would love to see wider implementation as well. I have seen many students struggle due to the high cost of textbooks. I remember having my own personal struggles because it was difficult for me financially as well. There were spells when I went through cycles of borrowing copies from the libraries and violating copyright rules by photocopying many pages out of necessity.



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

10:49am 19 February 2019 [Permalink](#)

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Hi Andrew

Well done on a great presentation! Here is a summary of the comments and questions you received following your presentation (including those you may have addressed verbally). Please respond in whatever way you choose - I suspect you may wish to deal with the first few in one response!

Best wishes

Simon

- ▶ DSpace is becoming widely used among global south / developing countries - excellent free repository tool.
- ▶ I know Martin Weller talks about academic writing not being something to get into to make money, but i wonder what other incentives can be offered for the commitment it takes
- ▶ interesting about textbook as a tangible benefit as my OU students often this they want something to highlight physically and when one of the modules went completely digital there was a big protest
- ▶ I'm interested to know why/how the publishers have a hold over the use of textbooks in your context Andrew.
- ▶ do students have access at home - arethere any technological access issuses /?
- ▶ would it be possible to commission text books ?
- ▶ Some really great points made about print-digital preferences which sometimes get conflated with OER- proprietary materials. So for OER /opentextbooks to be useful, a sustainabiity model for printing would be required.



[Andrew Augustine](#)

5:42pm 7 March 2019 [Permalink](#)

- ▶ DSpace is becoming widely used among global south / developing countries - excellent free repository tool. Ans: I am hopeful that UWISpace would become the same within the Caribbean.
- ▶ I know Martin Weller talks about academic writing not being something to get into to make money, but I wonder what other incentives can be offered for the commitment it takes. Ans: It is my opinion that there should be some monetary incentive for teachers who participate in the development of materials beyond the credit they may receive for their work. This is still fairly controversial as there are ministries who are of the opinion that development of materials falls within the responsibility of teachers.
- ▶ interesting about textbook as a tangible benefit as my OU students often this they want something to highlight physically and when one of the modules went completely digital there was a big protest. Ans: this is an issue even with the policymakers. In providing free books, something is physically given. In the case of providing the online resource, it is not tangible unless printed. This is a typical hurdle that can be overcome with communication and change management initiatives in OER implementation
- ▶ I'm interested to know why/how the publishers have a hold over the use of textbooks in your context Andrew. Ans: This is simply through effectively

lobbying governments.

- ▶ do students have access at home - are there any technological access issues /?

Ans: There are no significant technology access issues within schools although many students do not have internet access at home.

- ▶ would it be possible to commission text books ? Ans: That would be possible...worth investigating...

- ▶ Some really great points made about print-digital preferences which sometimes get conflated with OER- proprietary materials. So for OER /opentextbooks to be useful, a sustainability model for printing would be required. Ans: Of course there has to be a proper sustainability model. This would be partially financed (if not totally) by the savings from removing the free traditional textbook program.

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